

REMARKS

Applicant respectfully requests favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

Regarding the alleged indefiniteness, Applicant respectfully notes that the limitations in question have antecedent basis at Claim 9, line 10 and Claim 17, line 10 ("at least part of the shaft portion"). Accordingly, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph, is unwarranted and should be withdrawn.

The Examiner's statement in paragraph 6, page 6, of the Office Action is not understood. To the extent that "wherein" clauses appear in the claims, they clearly limit the scope of the claims and are not mere statements of intended use or field of use.

Claims 1-7 and 9-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hasegawa (US 6,351,886 B1) in view of Takahashi et al. (4,320,824).

Without acceding to the rejection, independent Claims 1, 9, and 17 have been amended to recite certain distinctive features of Applicant's invention with greater particularity. Claim 1 now recites, inter alia, a clutch housing pre-product having a shaft portion and an outer drum portion. The outer peripheral cylindrical portion of the outer drum portion is formed while being offset in an axial

direction with respect to the shaft portion so that it is not opposite, in a radial direction, to a region where a hole is to be formed in the second step. In the second step, a hole is formed in the shaft portion and extends substantially perpendicular to an axial direction of the shaft portion. In the third step, the outer peripheral cylindrical portion of the outer drum portion is further formed so that a part of the outer peripheral cylindrical portion is radially opposite the region where the hole is formed in the second step.

The primary reference, Hasegawa, fails to teach or suggest an outer drum portion having an outer peripheral cylindrical portion that is formed while being offset in an axial direction with respect to a shaft portion so that it is not opposite, in a radial direction, to a region where the shaft portion is formed with a hole that extends substantially perpendicular to an axial direction of the shaft portion (as currently and previously recited in Claim 1). Indeed, the rejection itself concedes that Hasegawa fails to disclose forming such holes in a shaft portion as claimed (Office Action, paragraph 5, page 3). The rejection relies on element 1B of Takahashi to remedy this deficiency. Applicant notes, however, that Takahashi's element 1B does not represent a hole that is formed in the shaft portion and

that extends substantially perpendicular to an axial direction of the shaft portion. Rather, element 1B represents a portion of a stepped through hole formed in the axial direction of the front cover of a clutch housing. It follows, of course, that the applied references further fail to teach or suggest the formation of a cylindrical portion of the outer drum portion while being axially offset so as not to be radially opposite to a region where such a substantially perpendicular hole is to be formed, the cylindrical portion thereafter being further formed to have a part that is radially opposite the region where the substantially perpendicular hole is formed.

Accordingly, Claim 1 distinguishes patentably from the applied references. Claim 1 and its dependents should therefore be allowed.

Amended Claims 9 and 17 recite, inter alia, an outer drum portion having an outer peripheral cylindrical portion joined to the shaft portion through a disk portion, which is oblique with respect to an axis of the shaft portion such that the outer peripheral cylindrical portion is offset in an axial direction with respect to the shaft portion so that it is not opposite, in a radial direction, to at least part of the shaft portion. The outer peripheral cylindrical portion is further formed in step (c) so that a part of the

outer peripheral cylindrical portion is radially opposite the part of the shaft portion.

While the Office Action purports to address Claims 9 and 17, it clearly fails to address the specific limitations recited in those claims. For example, the rejection fails to address the recited outer drum portion having an outer peripheral cylindrical portion joined to the shaft portion through a disk portion, which is oblique with respect to an axis of the shaft portion, so that the outer peripheral cylindrical portion is offset in an axial direction with respect to the shaft portion so that it is not opposite to at least part of the shaft portion in a radial direction (as currently and previously recited in Claims 9 and 17). Moreover, the applied references neither teach nor suggest the presently added feature of the outer peripheral cylindrical portion subsequently being further formed to have a part that is radially opposite the part of the shaft portion.

Accordingly, Claims 9 and 17, and their respective dependents, should also be allowed.

Applicant respectfully requests that this application now be passed to issue.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 (XA-10032) any fees under 37

C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been separately requested, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

By: 
Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568

Miles & Stockbridge, P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive
Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102-3833
(703) 903-9000

Michael A. Minter
Reg. No. 58,797

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